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Ministry of Forests and Range

NEW LICENCE BOLSTERS COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION

VICTORIA – Government has introduced a new forestry licence to assist the harvest of Crown timber that poses a fire risk to nearby communities, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"As part of our commitment to fully implement the Filmon report, we're developing tools to support local governments and protect communities," said Coleman. "Responsibility for reducing the fire risk doesn't rest with just one party. All levels of government must work together to manage the threat on an ongoing basis."

Previously, the Forest Act didn't recognize community safety as a reason to harvest Crown timber. The new licence provides more flexibility to manage high-risk forest fuels identified by local Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

Forest district managers will issue the new licences based on professional harvesting proposals submitted by local governments. Approved volumes will be competitively awarded unless they're smaller than 2,000 cubic metres. In those cases, direct awards will be considered.

Streamlining amendments have also been made to the Forest Practices and Planning Regulation to support the new licence. The changes allow the removal of high-risk, non-merchantable timber from Crown land for safe disposal at another site. They also relax road access authorizations so harvesting can be conducted quickly.

To date, 25 Community Wildfire Protection Plans have been completed. Another 47 are under development.

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